



# DHS Today via E-mail

February 27, 2001

DHS employees didn't waste those year-end excess leave hours. They donated many of them to a program that helps fellow employees. A total of 10,477 sick and annual leave hours were donated to the DHS Catastrophic Leave Bank in November and December 2000. Many co-workers will benefit because of the generosity of these donations. At any given time any DHS employee has the potential need for this program. There are currently 13 DHS employees on catastrophic leave. This means they have exhausted their own sick and annual leave time due to serious illness and are able to remain on paid leave thanks to the catastrophic leave program.



A committee made up of six DHS employees and a chairman appointed by the DHS director reviews and approves applications for the program. The committee represents a cross section of the department. Thanks to generous donations by DHS employees and the conscientious service of the committee, the bank has a healthy balance of more than 36,000 hours. A special thanks goes to each person who made a contribution. For information on how you can donate leave time to the bank, contact **Lynda White** at (501) 682-6164.

The Arkansas Employee Assistance Program now has an office in Fayetteville to serve people in that area of the state. The EAP offers state employees a variety of counseling services through three offices and a network of affiliates statewide. The new office in Fayetteville is located at 31 E. Center St., Suite 207. The EAP also has an office in Hot Springs at 204 Nash Street, and in Little Rock at 1123 South University Ave. To schedule an appointment at any office or find out more information on services available in your area, call the toll-free number, 1-800-542-6021.

-more-

DHS employee Tim Ragsdale, a statistician with the Office of Fiscal Management's Research and Statistics section, is being featured in the February 2001 edition of *Quest*, a bi-monthly magazine of the National Muscular Dystrophy Association. The article talks about disabled people who work. In the U.S., 75 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed. The author contacted local MDA offices asking about patients with neuro-muscular diseases who worked. The local office suggested Tim and he was interviewed about his career with DHS. The portion of the article that includes Tim's interview is reprinted below.

**Tim Ragsdale** describes himself as a "career bureaucrat" because he's worked his way up through various positions with the state of Arkansas.

Currently a statistician for the Arkansas Department of Human Services, he's responsible for collecting data from the department's employees to help determine what proportion of time workers are spending on different programs.

"I've just kind of worked where opportunities arose. I had my first little foot in the door and looked for opportunities to advance along the way," said Ragsdale, who has Becker muscular dystrophy and uses a power wheelchair.

But earning a living and punching the clock weren't always the routine for Ragsdale, 37, who started working in 1988.



**Tim works on his computer at Research and Statistics.**

"Before I started work, I was on SSI because of my disability," he said. "I thought that was where I would be for the rest of my life."

Ragsdale attended several years of college but didn't graduate, something he considers a failure that often weighs heavily on him. Then he became more discouraged by watching his two older brothers, who are also affected by Becker MD: One struggled to work and eventually gave up, and the other didn't attempt to work.

Fortunately, a rehabilitation program helped him regain the focus he needed to get back on a career track.

"I just resolved that I was going to make good decisions in pursuit of working. My logic was, I'm going to try and go through the motions. If it works out, great and wonderful. But if not, at least I tried," Ragsdale said.

-more-

After that, he said, a job practically fell into his lap, "but really I had done the groundwork so it would."

His job today has many highlights, said Ragsdale.

"What I enjoy about this position is that I've been given responsibility for this data, it is my responsibility that it get collected, and I'm accountable for it," he said.

He plans to keep working toward advancement, including someday finishing college, keeping in mind that his neuromuscular disease can progress.

"I've got to keep moving up to get into positions where I am relying less on my physical ability," said Ragsdale, who drives himself to his job in a wheelchair-accessible van.

Ragsdale said he's had to keep a careful eye on his income throughout his work history: first to make enough money to afford to work, and now to make sure he maintains eligibility for state Medicaid assistance with health and personal care.

Along the way he's lost several government benefits that made a financial safety net for him, such as subsidized housing. But Ragsdale said he wouldn't trade the financial convenience for the satisfaction and emotional boost he gets from working.

"It means so much to me to have responsibility and to put myself in a position that I can dream and hope for a better future. I know that I don't have to settle for what I have today," he said. "If I keep working, I can have so much more in my life."

**Dorothy Henderson**, Lincoln County DHS administrator, was recently honored as Woman of the Year by the Star City Area Chamber of Commerce at the group's annual awards banquet. She was chosen for her



outstanding community involvement and dedication to Lincoln County. She was introduced as a tireless champion for the less fortunate who has achieved a delicate balance between helping others and empowering them to live independently. She sees potential where many people see hopelessness and throughout Lincoln County, she has encouraged, empowered and inspired people. She is serving as the chamber's first vice president and will be installed as president in January 2002. Dorothy's other community involvement has included being a member of the Lincoln County Lend A Hand board, the Warren City Council, the

-more-

Bradley County Chamber of Commerce, the Bradley County Industrial Development Committee and the Bradley County Civic League, and numerous religious-related activities and positions. Dorothy and her husband, **Larry**, live at Warren and have two sons and two granddaughters.

The DHS County Administrators' Association sponsored a luncheon for the Legislators and their guests on Tuesday, February 6, 2001, at the Association of Arkansas Counties building in Little Rock. **Amber Mullis**, Association president, welcomed the group and introduced DCO Director **Ruth Whitney**. Whitney presented special guest, **Governor Mike Huckabee**, who praised the employees of the Division of County Operations for their continued success in administering the Food Stamp and TEA Programs. Spotlighting the TEA program, Huckabee said he was proud of DCO employees' performance, which was recognized nationwide by the Department of Health and Human Services through receipt of \$2.8 million in enhanced funding. The gathering of 198 legislators, guests and Association members enjoyed bar-b-que catered by Woody's Bar-B-Que of Waldenburg, AR. **Janice Griffin**, Poinsett County administrator, coordinated the event.

Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center Superintendent **Boyd Hancock** announces that center is now online at [www.seahdc.homestead.com](http://www.seahdc.homestead.com). The site development grew out of the Center's increased outreach and training initiative. SEAHDC ONLINE not only provides information about the Center and its services, it provides training updates, a monthly newsletter called the "Express Train," volunteer information, and updates and contact information for the annual Open Horizons conference. The site is designed to serve as a resource for employees, community programs and anyone interested in learning about the Center. Staff Development Specialist Debra Banks designed it.



**Linda Wood**, R.N., has been chosen as the Jonesboro Human Development Center (JHDC) Employee of the Quarter for the First Quarter of 2001. In the past 15 years, Linda has provided staff training to hundreds of employees through her work as Nurse Instructor in the Staff Development Department. In addition, she is Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, the Safety Committee and also serves on the Infection Control and Walk Through Committees.

-more-

Linda, who's known as a real advocate for the disabled, has seen many positive improvements in her years at Jonesboro HDC. "There have been many options made available that have improved the quality of life for people residing at the Center. Many personal supports are now in place to assist people with choices concerning vocational skills training which includes jobs on and off campus. These jobs have provided more independence for people," she said."

After retirement, Linda hopes to take part in short-term missions or volunteer work in a medically related setting. She and her husband, **Bill**, would also enjoy doing summer volunteer work at Yellowstone National Park.

**Thanks so much**

**Rose Brown**, a DHS employee in the Office of Systems and Technology in Little Rock, lost her 17-year-old daughter on Feb 6, 2001. Rose did not have burial or life insurance to cover her daughter's funeral expenses and several DHS employees donated money to help with these costs. Rose would like to thank everyone in DHS who helped her out, not only financially, but also with flowers, cards, and telephone calls.

When DHS employees at the Alexander Human Development Center **Bruce Johnson** and **C. W. McCool** each told a former co-worker "call me if you need me," they really meant it. **June Taylor**, a medical/legal secretary at the Arkansas State Hospital, used to work with Johnson and McCool at the Alexander HDC. When her husband became ill and was hospitalized for four months, Bruce and C.W. were there to help. During that time, the two gentlemen helped June out with home maintenance and some car repairs. "My house had to be modified for wheelchair access and required a lot of work that I could not do plus the normal daily maintenance needs that I was unable to accomplish on my own, " said June. They did this work in addition to their regular jobs at Alexander HDC. June's husband is now recovering at home. "Many people say 'call me if you need me' but are never there in your time of need. They helped me tremendously." She wanted to say thanks publicly.

-more-

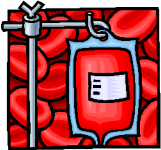
**It's not too late.....**to register for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Arkansas Women's Conference, which will be held Friday, March 9, 2001, at the Holiday Inn-Airport in Little Rock. Several one-hour workshops have been added which directly focus on women's performance in the workplace:



“Organizing Yourself at Work”, “Effectively Presenting Yourself & Your Ideas at Work,” “Sexual Harassment & Workplace Discrimination,” “Technology Today and Tomorrow,” “Business and Personal Etiquette,” and “How Do You See Yourself.”

The keynote speaker is **Patricia Fripp**, a nationally known motivational speaker who speaks to people about how to better themselves in their job, get the promotions they want and achieve the recognition they deserve. The closing session will feature local publisher **Karen Hardy** who will speak on “Mars and Venus at Work” – keys to men and women working together, interviewing and other job related situations.

For further details, call Valerie Davis at (501) 791-2020 or visit the website: [www.arkwomensconf.homestead.com](http://www.arkwomensconf.homestead.com) where registration forms are available. Registration is only \$50 and continuing professional education credits will be awarded to participants.



The Arkansas Secretary of State's Office and the American Red Cross are sponsoring the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual State Capitol Blood Drive from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., March 5, 2001 on third floor (westside) of the State Capitol. All state employees are invited to give blood.

Donors will receive complimentary t-shirts and shuttle service around the State Capitol complex will be available to make parking more convenient. For questions or to sign up to donate, you can call **Tonya Springer** of the Secretary of State's Office at 682-1275.

Do you have something you'd like to share in the newsletter? Send an email to [Joyce.Williams@mail.state.ar.us](mailto:Joyce.Williams@mail.state.ar.us). You can also fax items to (501) 682-6512 or call (501) 682-6580.

